

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Original) A waste gas desulfurization process comprising:

providing a H₂S-containing waste gas stream;

providing a O₂-containing stream;

in a millisecond contact time reactor having a gas mixing zone, a reaction zone, and a cooling zone, mixing together said H₂S-containing gas stream and said O₂-containing gas stream in said mixing zone to form a reactant gas mixture, said reaction zone containing a catalyst device having activity for catalyzing the partial oxidation of H₂S to elemental sulfur and water;

maintaining the temperature of said reaction zone above 300°C;

passing said reactant gas mixture over said catalyst device such that the contact time between said catalyst device and a portion of said reactant gas mixture that contacts said catalyst device is sufficiently brief to allow the reaction $\text{H}_2\text{S} + 1/2 \text{O}_2 \rightarrow 1/x \text{S}_x + \text{H}_2\text{O}$ ($x = 2, 6 \text{ or } 8$) to occur, and a product gas stream is formed comprising gaseous elemental sulfur and water;

passing said product gas stream into said cooling zone and cooling said product stream to a temperature above the dewpoint of sulfur, to provide a partially cooled product stream;

passing said partially cooled product stream into a sulfur condenser and further cooling said partially cooled product stream to the dewpoint temperature of elemental sulfur, or lower.

11. (Original) The process of claim 10 wherein at least the reaction zone of said reactor is capable of withstanding temperatures of at least 1,500°C, said H₂S-containing gas stream and said O₂-containing gas stream are combined in said mixing zone to form a reactant gas mixture having a molar ratio of H₂S to O₂ of about 2:1 or less, and the temperature of said reaction zone is 700-1,500°C.

12. (Original) The process of claim 10 comprising preheating said H₂S and/or O₂ stream up to about 200°C before contacting said catalyst device.

13. (Currently amended) A waste gas desulfurization process comprising:
providing a H₂S-containing waste gas stream;
providing a O₂-containing stream;
in a millisecond contact time reactor having a gas mixing zone, a reaction zone, and a cooling
zone, mixing together said H₂S-containing gas stream and said O₂-containing gas stream in said
mixing zone to form a reactant gas mixture, said reaction zone containing a catalyst device having
activity for catalyzing the partial oxidation of H₂S to elemental sulfur and water;
maintaining the temperature of said reaction zone above 300°C;
passing said reactant gas mixture over said catalyst device such that the contact time between
said catalyst device and a portion of said reactant gas mixture that contacts said catalyst device is
sufficiently brief to allow the reaction $\text{H}_2\text{S} + 1/2 \text{O}_2 \rightarrow 1/x \text{S}_x + \text{H}_2\text{O}$ (x = 2, 6 or 8) to occur, and a
product gas stream is formed comprising gaseous elemental sulfur and water;
passing said product gas stream into said cooling zone and cooling said product stream to a
temperature above the dewpoint of sulfur, to provide a partially cooled product stream;
passing said partially cooled product stream into a sulfur condenser and further cooling said
partially cooled product stream to the dewpoint temperature of elemental sulfur, or lower, wherein
~~The process of claim 10 wherein~~ said contact time is no more than about 200 milliseconds.
14. (Original) The process of claim 10 comprising recovering a product comprising elemental sulfur and, optionally, venting a substantially desulfurized residual gas.
15. (Original) The process of claim 10 comprising providing a H₂S-containing gas containing at least about 1 vol.% H₂S.
16. (Original) The process of claim 10 wherein said O₂-containing gas is chosen from the group consisting of purified O₂, air, and O₂ enriched air.
17. (Original) The process of claim 10 further comprising maintaining the temperature of said reaction zone between about 850°C - 1,300°C.

18. (Original) The process of claim 17 further comprising regulating reactor inlet temperatures, regulating H₂S concentration in the reactant gas mixture, and/or applying heat to said catalyst device such that the temperature of said catalyst device is maintained at a desired temperature between said 850-1,300°C.
19. (Original) The process of claim 17 further comprising maintaining autothermal reaction promoting conditions.
20. (Original) The process of claim 10 wherein said catalyst device comprises at least one metal chosen from the group consisting of platinum, rhodium, ruthenium, iridium, nickel, palladium, iron, cobalt, rhenium, rubidium, vanadium, bismuth and antimony.
21. (Original) The process of claim 20 wherein said catalyst device comprises at least one metal chosen from the group consisting of platinum, rhodium, ruthenium, iridium, nickel, palladium, iron, cobalt, rhenium and rubidium.
22. (Original) The process of claim 21 wherein said catalyst device comprises at least one metal chosen from the group consisting of platinum, rhodium, ruthenium, nickel, palladium and iridium
23. (Original) The process of claim 22 wherein said catalyst device comprises platinum, rhodium or a mixture thereof.
24. (Original) The process of claim 20 wherein said catalyst device comprises vanadium, bismuth or antimony.
25. (Currently amended) The process of claim 20 wherein said catalyst device comprises at least one lanthanide element (Ln) chosen from the group consisting of La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Pm, Sm, Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb and Lu.
26. (Original) The process of claim 25 wherein at least one said lanthanide element is samarium, ytterbium or praseodymium.

27. (Original) The process of claim 10 wherein said catalyst device comprises at least one structure chosen from the group consisting of gauzes, monoliths and a plurality of divided units.
28. (Currently amended) The process of claim 27 wherein said divided units are selected from the group consisting of ~~comprise~~ particles, granules, beads, pills, pellets, cylinders, trilobes, extrudates or spheres.
29. (Original) The process of claim 27 wherein said structure comprises a refractory support.
30. (Original) The process of claim 29 wherein said catalyst refractory support comprises zirconia or alumina.
31. (Original) The process of claim 10 wherein said catalyst device comprises platinum and a lanthanide metal oxide chosen from the group consisting of cerium oxide and lanthanum oxide.
32. (Original) The process of claim 31 wherein said catalyst device comprises rhodium and samarium oxide.
33. (Original) The process of claim 10 wherein said catalyst device comprises a platinum-rhodium alloy disposed on a lanthanide oxide coated refractory support.
34. (Original) The process of claim 33 wherein said catalyst device comprises a samarium oxide coated refractory support.
35. (Currently amended) The process of claim 10 wherein said catalyst device comprises at least one catalytic carbided metal.
36. (Original) The process of claim 35 wherein said carbided metal comprises platinum and rhodium.

37. (Original) The process of claim 10 comprising operating said reactor at a space velocity of at least about 20,000 hr⁻¹.

38. (Original) The process of claim 10 comprising operating said reactor at superatmospheric pressure.

39-53. (Canceled)

54. (Currently amended) The process of claim ~~53~~10 comprising, in ~~the same~~said reactor, passing a gaseous hydrocarbon over said catalyst device to carbide said catalyst device, stopping the flow of said carbiding gas and subsequently beginning flow of said H₂S containing gas over said carbided catalyst device at a temperature sufficient to initiate H₂S catalytic partial oxidation to form elemental sulfur and water.

55. (New) The process of claim 10 wherein said contact time is less than 50 milliseconds.

56. (New) The process of claim 10 wherein said contact time is less than 20 milliseconds.

57. (New) The process of claim 10 wherein said contact time is less than 10 milliseconds.

58. (New) The process of claim 35 wherein H₂S conversion is at least about 82%, selectivity for elemental sulfur product is at least about 70% and selectivity for SO₂ is no more than about 10-13%.